

Gulf of Mexico Program Office FY 2003 Funding Guidance Request for Preproposals

I. Introduction

The Gulf of Mexico Program Office (GMPO) Funding Guidance (Guidance) is a resource to assist the consortium of Gulf State, Federal, and non-governmental organizations which together constitute the Gulf of Mexico Program (GMP). It identifies joint priorities of the GMP and, therefore, the funding priorities of the GMPO. This Guidance also describes the funding and decision process for projects to be funded during fiscal year 2003. This federal financial assistance program is identified in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance as CFDA # 66.475.

II. Purpose

The purpose of the Gulf of Mexico Program is to protect and restore the health and productivity of the Gulf of Mexico in ways consistent with the economic well being of the region. Our mission is to protect, restore, and enhance the coastal and marine waters of the Gulf and its natural habitats; to sustain living resources; to protect human health and the food supply; and to ensure the long term use of the Gulf shores, beaches, and waters. To carry out this mission, we must develop and maintain a partnership of State and Federal agencies, local governments, academia, regional business and industry, and individual citizens and communities that effectively addresses the complex ecological problems that cross State, Federal, and international jurisdictions and boundaries.

By publishing the Funding Guidance, GMPO seeks to:

- ▶ implement our mission by fostering development of appropriate projects and actions;
- ▶ achieve the specific objectives and annual performance goals established;
- ▶ maximize the opportunity for developing joint partnerships between agencies and non-governmental organizations to achieve common environmental objectives;
- ▶ enable Gulf State agencies to provide guidance to facilitate the submission of preproposals for the State meetings;
- ▶ identify joint priorities so that GMP partners can use them in internal planning and so that project proposals can be targeted to opportunities that will achieve the most significant environmental improvement in each of our Priority Areas;
- ▶ provide a fair and open competition process for selecting and funding the best projects based on merit and cost-effectiveness, thereby more effectively achieving program

objectives; and

- ▶ reduce the administrative burden associated with competing for individual project funding at various, unpredictable times throughout the fiscal year.

III. FY 2003 Priorities

The GMP is focusing its technical and financial resources in four areas:

- ▶ Improving water quality in the 12 priority coastal areas (Figure 1), specifically for those waters identified as impaired by Gulf States in accordance with Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, in order to protect public health and restore the full range of beneficial uses;
- ▶ Protecting public health by supporting educational efforts targeted at high risk consumers concerning the dangers of naturally-occurring pathogens and supporting State efforts to detect, track, and report harmful algal bloom events;
- ▶ Restoring and protecting important marine habitats that are essential to the recreational and commercial fisheries of the Gulf, including the prevention and control of invasive aquatic species; and
- ▶ Reducing nutrient loading in the lower Mississippi River and its tributaries and implementing coordinated monitoring, modeling, and research in order to implement the *Action Plan for Reducing, Controlling, and Mitigating Hypoxia in the Northern Gulf of Mexico*.

FIGURE 1. PRIORITY COASTAL AREAS

1. Lower Laguna Madre
2. Texas Coastal Bend & Bays
3. Galveston Bay
4. Barataria-Terrebonne Bays
5. Lake Pontchartrain
6. Mississippi Coastal Basins
7. Mobile Bay
8. Pensacola Bay
9. Lower Suwannee River
10. Tampa Bay
11. Sarasota Bay
12. Charlotte Harbor



Two fundamental strategies will be employed by the GMP to achieve the desired outcomes: (1) **place-based**, watershed protection lead by State and local communities to reduce pollution at the source and to protect and restore important habitat in coastal watersheds, estuaries, and near-shore areas; and (2) **Gulf-wide** initiatives, such as, monitoring and assessment, education, public outreach, or policy development, that are designed to deliver information, technical expertise, and/or financial resources in support of State and local actions to achieve a desired outcome or develop a particular capability (e.g., to prevent consumption of contaminated shellfish by at-risk populations or to develop an early warning system for harmful algal blooms).

Place-based, watershed protection strategies will be based on the fundamental requirements of the Clean Water Act, including state adoption of water quality standards; identification of impaired waters based on those standards; development of TMDLs to assess and allocate loads to various sources; and achieving load reductions through appropriate regulatory and/or voluntary, incentive programs. To accomplish this process, a number of states have adopted and are in various stages of implementing basin strategies to assess, model, and implement load reductions on a rotational basis. The GMP will align the timing and delivery of technical and financial resources with each Gulf States' basin/watershed planning process and the priorities established through that process.

This approach reinforces the concept of State and locally-led management on a watershed basis. Adopting this approach fosters cooperation by multiple agencies (federal, state, and local) in order to better target resources and achieve common goals. In addition, this approach engages the local citizens and landowners directly in the decision-making process at all critical points from standard-setting to pollution reduction.

The basic premise of this approach is simple: the first step in restoring the integrity of the waters in the Gulf of Mexico is to restore the full aquatic life and recreational uses that are attainable (as determined by the States) in the coastal watersheds and estuaries that are currently not meeting numeric or narrative standards or that are impaired due to extensive habitat loss or degradation. Taking this step ensures that local coastal communities directly benefit from improved water quality and that the Gulf as a whole will ultimately benefit from the cumulative efforts taken at the land-coast interface.

In addition, in recognition that the Gulf States of Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida have identified estuaries of national significance through the National Estuary Program that merit special attention and management action, the GMP through this Guidance will build upon these locally-led, community-based initiatives and support implementation of their Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans.

IV. Anticipated Funding Levels and Criteria for Evaluating Proposals

Extramural funds (i.e., assistance agreements, including cooperative agreements, grants, and interagency agreements) administered by the GMPO are awarded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the authority of Section 104(b) of the Clean Water Act. That Section authorizes the Administrator to:

- ▶ collect and disseminate basic data on chemical, physical, and biological effects of varying water quality and other information pertaining to pollution and its prevention, reduction, and elimination;
- ▶ cooperate with and make grants to or contracts with other Federal departments and agencies, State water pollution control agencies, interstate agencies, other public and private agencies, institutions, organizations, industries involved, and individuals in the preparation and conduct of such research and other activities related to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution;
- ▶ develop effective and practical processes, methods, and prototype devices for the prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution; and
- ▶ establish and maintain research fellowships at public or nonprofit private educational institutions or research organizations.

In FY 2003, the GMPO anticipates providing approximately \$2.0 million¹ in extramural assistance agreements to support state and local projects.

To be considered for funding by the GMPO, projects must meet the following criteria. Projects must:

- ▶ be consistent with the underlying Section 104(b) authority as described above;
- ▶ address GMP priorities, as described in Section III, and support GMP objectives and subobjectives (Appendix 1);

¹*Please note that the dollar values above are targets only based on previous funding levels. These targets are subject to change for various reasons, including Congressional and Agency action based on final appropriations. In addition, amounts may change based on decisions reached by the Gulf of Mexico Program Office in terms of the appropriate financial mechanisms for accomplishing a particular project or activity (i.e., contract versus assistance agreement) or because of a change in relative priorities for particular projects.*

- ▶ promote public-private partnerships and leverage other public and private funding;
- ▶ provide a clear articulation of project outcomes and how information will be used/shared with the public; and
- ▶ employ approaches or achieve results that are transferable to other regions of the Gulf of Mexico.

If the applicant has received financial support from the GMPO in the past, the past performance of the applicant will be taken into consideration. This includes the applicant's past performance in terms of meeting reporting requirements, managing costs within budget, producing final products, and successfully completing projects within approved project periods.

In addition, special consideration will be given to those projects that are priorities for implementation by Gulf National Estuary Programs under approved work plans or Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans, and that:

- ▶ address environmental challenges that are common to the Gulf NEPs and that pose a threat to the health and integrity of the Gulf of Mexico;
- ▶ support the development of a common, Gulf-wide network for assessing, measuring environmental results, and reporting the status of key environmental indicators that pertain to the health of the NEPs and to the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem;
- ▶ support pollution prevention and habitat protection and restoration actions that are mutually beneficial to the NEPs and the Gulf of Mexico; and
- ▶ coordinate public education, outreach, and public relations activities in order to ensure broad citizen awareness and involvement in the activities of the NEPs and the GMP.

Please note that the GMPO, as the designated recommending official for the EPA is responsible for making final recommendations to the EPA regarding funding for any particular proposal. Final decisions regarding financial assistance for any project rest solely with the EPA.

V. Application Instructions for GMPO Assistance Agreements

All government agencies and non-profit organizations can request funding from the GMPO. To initiate a funding request, GMPO requests the submission of a ***preproposal***. An example Preproposal Format is provided in Appendix 2.

Preproposal Format: Preproposals should be of sufficient length to adequately describe the project and how it addresses each of the criteria provided in Section IV. Other attachments are

not required at the preproposal stage. Include the following numbered components in the order shown and under the headings that follow:

- 1. Project Title** - No more than 60 characters.
- 2. Requesting Agency/Organization** - Organization Name, Address, and Type (i.e., State or Interstate Agency or Commission; Sub-state or special purpose district; County; Municipality; Federal Agency; College or University; Tribal Organization; Individual; Federally funded research or development center; Private non-profit organization; or Other with description provided).
- 3. Point of Contact** - Name, Title, Phone Number, FAX Number, and Email address.
- 4. Applicable Priority Focus Area** - Identify the Priority Focus Area to which this project applies.
- 5. Applicable Priority Coastal Area** - Identify the Priority Coastal Area to which this project applies.
- 6. Applicable National Estuary Program** - If this project supports a Gulf NEP workplan or Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan identify the NEP.
- 7. Applicable Project Impact Area(s)** - Identify the applicable: County(ies); City(ies); eight digit hydrologic unit code(s); and impaired waterbodies/segments appropriate for the watersheds most affected by this project. If the project is broadly applicable simply identify it as a “Gulf-wide” project.
- 8. State and/or Local Community-Based Collaborators** - List key stakeholders (other government agencies or NGOs). Evidence of support (e.g., letters) may be requested for full proposals.
- 9. Applicable Annual Sub-Objectives** - Identify the Annual Sub-Objectives to which this project applies.
- 10. Project Description** - Provide a 2-3 paragraph synopsis that effectively describes the major actions to be taken and the outcomes expected to be achieved by this project.
- 11. Eligible Funding Criteria** - Specify how this project meets the funding criteria outlined in Section IV of this guidance.
- 12. Project Description** - Provide an explanation of how this project addresses each of the Priority Objectives / Sub-objectives identified in Section 9.

13. Community Education & Outreach - State if there is an education/outreach component. If applicable, describe the target audience and the means to be used to reach the target audience.

14. Milestones - Include a table specifying milestones/final products and projected due dates (by quarter).

15. Project Duration - Specify project duration from 6 months up to 2 years.

16. Estimated Project Costs - Provide the current estimate for the Total project value, the amount requested from GMPO, and the other funds that will be provided to implement this project if awarded. Note: Funding is not assured for subsequent years. Indicate the amount requested per year if multiple years.

17. Project Budget Information - The application form contains an embedded EXCEL spreadsheet for the purpose of detailing the budget for this project. The spreadsheet software is automatically activated by double-clicking anywhere within the cells of the spreadsheet template. Fill in each applicable cell of the spreadsheet. The total budget (e.g., "Total All Project Funding Sources" cell) should equal the total Estimated Project Costs identified in Item 16.

Other Considerations: Please note the following before preproposals are developed:

Eligibility - Assistance (through grants, cooperative agreements, and interagency agreements) is available pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 104(b). State pollution control agencies, interstate agencies, other public or nonprofit private institutions, and individuals are eligible, but "for-profit" organizations are not.

Ineligible Activities - GMPO will not fund under this Guidance routine construction projects, such as, installing centralized or decentralized sewage treatment systems; land acquisition; or projects that are largely general education/outreach or conferences unless they meet a clear need established by the Gulf States, GMP Management Committee, or GMPO.

Additional Funds - Applicants seeking additional funding under an existing award must also apply.

Matching Requirements - There is no matching requirement; however, one of the evaluation criteria requires partnerships and leverage funding.

Quality Assurance/Peer Review - *An approved quality assurance plan will be required for any project involving environmental data collection activities prior to the commencement of data collection and reporting.* Depending on the scientific basis of the work conducted, draft products may be subject to peer review before the final product is accepted.

Project Clarification/Revisions - Applicants may be contacted for clarification and for the

purpose of negotiating changes in project terms and amounts.

Confidentiality - Preproposal information will not be kept confidential.

Multiple Preproposals - An applicant may submit multiple proposals. If one organization submits more than one preproposal, we request that a single, coordinated package accompanied by a transmittal letter is provided. The transmittal letter should indicate an overall Contact Person (including telephone number, e-mail, and address) and, ideally, ***a ranking of preproposals in priority order with an explanation of the ranking.***

Notification - Letters of notification will be sent to the applicants.

Address - All preproposals **should be submitted electronically** to: car.gloria@epa.gov **by January 31, 2002.**

Hard copies may be sent (but only if email is not available) to:
Attention: Gloria Car
Gulf of Mexico Program Office
Building 1103, Room 202
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529

Preproposal Evaluation: The following steps will be followed for evaluating preproposals:

- (1) Each of the Gulf States will convene a meeting after January 2001 (the date and time to be advertised broadly and to each applicant) to give the opportunity for presentation of the preproposals. The representatives of State and local agencies, environmental and business/industry organizations or groups, universities, Citizen Advisory Committee members, and other groups engaged in managing coastal watersheds and marine resources in the State may attend the presentations. Applicants do not have to attend to present the project. All projects submitted for place-based projects within that State will be reviewed. The projects are scored according to the evaluation criteria in Section IV. Those attendees with a conflict of interest must recuse themselves from reviewing a particular project. These meetings, in addition to providing reviews for the projects, also provide an opportunity for discussions of activities in the State and opportunities to coordinate efforts.
- (2) Following the initial evaluation, the preproposals will be evaluated based on the criteria provided in Section IV by each GMPO Priority Area Lead and other staff project officers. An overall score will then be developed and provided to the GMPO Director.
- (3) The GMPO Director considers the scoring of the projects and selects the final list of projects for funding.

- (6) The GMPO will contact all applicants and notify them as to whether or not their preproposal(s) have been selected to move to the next stage of the application process and full Federal Applications for Assistance will be requested. ***Please note that selection of a preproposal is not a guarantee of funding for the project.*** Those applicants whose preproposals were not selected are also notified and may request reasons why they were not selected.

Full Application Review: A letter notifying the applicant of acceptance of the preproposal for funding will indicate the date when the full applications should be received by GMPO. The evaluation of the full application packages will be made by the Project Officer assigned for the project as well as by an internal staff reviewer. The GMPO Director will make the final recommendations and determine the amount of the award via a decision memorandum to the EPA - Region 4 Office in Atlanta. Final determinations and notification of the award to the applicant will be made by the Region 4 Office of Policy and Management.

Questions concerning the application process can be directed to:

Ms. Gloria Car
Gulf of Mexico Program Office
Building 1103, Room 202
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529
Telephone: (228) 688-2421
e-mail: car.gloria@epa.gov

Appendix 1

Gulf of Mexico Program Objectives and Subobjectives Fiscal Year 2003

Objective 1: By 2009, restore water and habitat quality in 20% of the impaired segments in the 12 priority coastal areas (i.e., 71 of the 354 segments) to levels that meet state water quality standards.

Subobjective

1(A): By the end of 2004, watershed restoration actions will be implemented to restore beneficial uses in 71 of the impaired coastal segments.

Objective 2: Protect public health by assisting Gulf States and coastal communities to provide advisories concerning contaminated seafood and early warnings of harmful algal blooms.

Subobjectives

2(A): Reduce the rate of shellfish-borne *Vibrio vulnificus* illnesses caused by consumption of commercially-harvested raw or undercooked oysters by 60% on average for 2007 and 2008.

2(B): Assist States in developing consistent consumption advisories for mercury in marine and estuarine species by the end of 2003.

2(C): Complete a pilot project for an early-warning system to support State and coastal community efforts to manage harmful algal blooms (HABs) by the end of 2004.

Objective 3: By 2009, the GMP will restore, enhance, or protect important coastal and marine habitats in U.S. areas of the Gulf by 20,000 acres.

Subobjectives

3(A): Restore, enhance, or protect 2,400 acres each year between 2002 and 2009.

3(B): By 2009, develop and implement regional and state-specific aquatic nuisance species management plans for coastal waters designed to prevent new introductions and reduce the impact of established invasive species.

Objective 4: By the year 2015, reduce the 5-year running average areal extent of Gulf hypoxia to less than 3,100 square miles.

Subobjectives

4(A): Support the Action Plan for Reducing, Mitigating, and Controlling Hypoxia in the Northern Gulf of Mexico by facilitating research, monitoring, and modeling efforts that reduce uncertainties in the ecological and economic impacts of hypoxia.

4(B): Support the Action Plan by assisting the States of Louisiana and Mississippi in implementing voluntary actions to reduce their annual nitrogen discharge to the Mississippi/Atchafalaya River basin.

4(C): Assist in the implementation of Louisiana's *Coast 2050 Plan* to divert Mississippi River water and restore coastal wetlands in a manner that achieves a 15% reduction in the annual nitrate load from the River to the Gulf.

Objective 5: Foster regional stewardship and a strong sense of community and value among Gulf State residents and tourists to protect, restore, and responsibly use the resources of the Gulf of Mexico.

Subobjectives

5(A): By 2005, achieve improved regional awareness of the value of Gulf resources, key environmental issues, and actions underway or needed to solve the problems.

5(B): In 2003, support the Citizens Advisory Committee efforts to achieve improved regional awareness of the value of Gulf resources, key environmental issues, and actions underway or needed to solve the problems.

Appendix 2

Preproposal Format



GULF OF MEXICO PROGRAM PROJECT APPLICATION FORM/ABSTRACT

*All fields. If a field is not applicable to your project,
please indicate this with "NA" (Not Applicable).*

1. PROJECT TITLE					
2. REQUESTING AGENCY/ORGANIZATION	Name:				
	Address:				
	Type of Organization :				
3. POINT OF CONTACT	Name:				
	Title:				
	Phone #:		Fax #:		Email :
4. APPLICABLE FY 2003 PRIORITY FOCUS AREA					"X" Where Applicable:
Improving water quality in the 12 priority coastal areas (Figure 1), specifically for those waters identified as impaired by Gulf States in accordance with Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, in order to protect public health and restore the full range of beneficial uses.					
Protecting public health by supporting educational efforts targeted at high risk consumers concerning the dangers of naturally-occurring pathogens and supporting State efforts to detect, track, and report harmful algal bloom events.					
Restoring and protecting important marine habitats that are essential to the recreational and commercial fisheries of the Gulf, including the prevention and control of invasive aquatic species.					
Reducing nutrient loading in the lower Mississippi River and its tributaries and implementing coordinated monitoring, modeling, and research in order to implement the <i>Action Plan for Reducing, Controlling, and Mitigating Hypoxia in the Northern Gulf of Mexico</i> .					
5. APPLICABLE PRIORITY COASTAL AREA	X			6. APPLICABLE GULF NEP CCMP OR WORKPLAN	"X" Where Applicable:

Project #:

Texas Coastal Bend & Bays		Coastal Bend & Bays EP	
Galveston Bay		Galveston Bay NEP	
Barataria-Terrebonne Bays		Barataria-Terrebonne NEP	
Mobile Bay		Mobile Bay NEP	
Tampa Bay		Tampa Bay NEP	
Sarasota Bay		Sarasota Bay NEP	
Charlotte Harbor		Charlotte Harbor NEP	

7. Applicable Project Impact Area(s)

(Note: If this is a "Gulf-wide Project skip to Item 8.)

COUNTY / COUNTIES	CITY / CITIES	PRIORITY 8-DIGIT HYDROLOGIC UNIT CODES <i>See Listing of Priority HUCs in Attached Guidance.</i>	PRIORITY IMPAIRED COASTAL WATERBODIES / SEGMENTS <i>See Listing of Priority Waterbodies in Attached Guidance.</i>

8. STATE AND/OR LOCAL COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECT COLLABORATORS

X	
	1(A): - By the end of 2004, watershed restoration actions will be implemented to restore beneficial uses in 71 of the impaired coastal segments.
	2(A): - Reduce the rate of shellfish-borne <i>Vibrio vulnificus</i> illnesses caused by consumption of commercially-harvested raw or undercooked oysters by 60% on average for 2007 and 2008.
	2(B): - Assist States in developing consistent consumption advisories for mercury in marine and estuarine species by the end of 2003.
	2(C): - Complete a pilot project for an early-warning system to support State and coastal community efforts to manage harmful algal blooms (HABs) by the end of 2004.
	3(A): - Restore, enhance, or protect 2,400 acres coastal and marine habitat each year between 2002 and 2009.
	3(B): - By 2009, develop and implement regional and state-specific aquatic nuisance species management plans for coastal waters designed to prevent new introductions and reduce the impact of established invasive species.
	4(A): - Support the Action Plan for Reducing, Mitigating, and Controlling Hypoxia in the Northern Gulf of Mexico by facilitating research, monitoring, and modeling efforts that reduce uncertainties in the ecological and economic impacts of hypoxia.
	4(B): - Support the Action Plan by assisting the States of Louisiana and Mississippi in implementing voluntary actions to reduce their annual nitrogen discharge to the Mississippi/Atchafalaya River basin.
	4(C): - Assist in the implementation of Louisiana's <i>Coast 2050 Plan</i> to divert Mississippi River water and restore coastal wetlands in a manner that achieves a 15% reduction in the annual nitrate load from the River to the Gulf.
	5(A): - By 2005, achieve improved regional awareness of the value of Gulf resources, key environmental issues, and actions underway or needed to solve the problems.
	5(B): - In 2003, support the Citizens Advisory Committee efforts to achieve improved regional awareness of the value of Gulf resources, key environmental issues, and actions underway or needed to solve the problems.

10. PROJECT DESCRIPTION <i>(1-2 paragraph synopsis that effectively describes the actions and/or outcomes expected to be achieved by the project.)</i>	
11. ELIGIBLE FUNDING CRITERIA <i>(Please specify how this project meets the funding criteria outlined in Section IV of the FY2003 GMP Funding Guidance.)</i>	
12. SUB-OBJECTIVE APPLICABILITY <i>(Please explain how this project addresses the Sub-objectives identified in Section 9 Above.)</i>	
13. COMMUNITY EDUCATION & OUTREACH <i>(Please describe the education and outreach approach that will be used in supporting local understanding and support for this project.)</i>	
14. MILESTONES <i>(Please include a table specifying major project milestones/final products and</i>	

Project #:

*corresponding due
dates by quarter.)*

15. PROJECT DURATION	X Where Applicable:
6 Months or Less	
1 Year	
2 Years	

Project #:

16. ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS

TOTAL PROJECT COST:	TOTAL GMP ASSISTANCE FUNDS REQUESTED:	OTHER FUNDS:
\$	\$	\$

17. PROJECT BUDGET

(Detail Project Budget
According to Object Class
breakdown.)

(NOTE: Activate spreadsheet below by double-clicking on any cell. This is an active EXCEL spreadsheet which has been pre-programmed to automatically calculate row, column and summary totals.)

PROJECT BUDGET INFORMATION

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	GMP	Other Federal #1	Other Federal #2	Applicant's Match	State	Other
Grant Program Function or Activity Title:	Gulf of Mexico Program					
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:	66.475					
Budget Values in Whole Dollars						
OBJECT CLASS CATEGORIES						
a. Personnel						
b. Fringe Benefits						
c. Travel						
d. Equipment						
e. Supplies						
f. Contractual						
g. Construction						
h. Other						
Total Direct						
i. Charges (sum a-h)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
j. Indirect Charges						
k. TOTALS (sum i and j)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL ALL PROJECT FUNDING SOURCES (sum 1k-						\$ -

APPENDIX 3

(To be sent under separate cover if requested.)

Refer to# 7 in the Project Application Form: Applicable Project Impact Area.

Listing of Priority HUCs and Listing of Priority Waterbodies

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